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Why Philanthropy? Y Philanthropy!

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"We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give." **Winston Churchill.**

I am entering my 25th year of professional philanthropy. Throughout those years, I have had the blessing of working with hundreds of great volunteers who dared to dream dreams and make them reality by giving of their time, their talent, and their treasure. I have seen how lives have been changed through the financial support of others. I have seen churches built and religion deepening the human soul. I have seen scientific discoveries funded, children healed, artistic performances supported, and people educated at all levels from kindergarten to Ph.Ds. People's lives have been changed by philanthropy and humanity has become better through giving.

These great works come into being by individuals making a decision to change the world. Usually it is a small group of people, powered by faith in a vision of a better place, giving and encouraging others to do the same. The world can be transformed only by a small group committed to a cause. Jesus started only with 12 people dedicated to implement a vision of a better world.

Philanthropy is the art of giving to transform the world for the better. According to GivingUSA, 73% of all 2010 contributions come from individuals, 14% from charitable foundations, 8 % from estates and bequests. Business and corporations contributed 5% of all giving. Overall 2010 giving rose 3.8% over 2009.

Further the report showed that 35% percent of giving went to religion, 14% to education at all levels, 11% to charitable foundations, 9% to human services, 8% to health, and 23% to the balance of charitable causes.

With these funds, powered by people and vision, the world and people's lives were changed for the better in 2010. Locally, we have the opportunity to do the same for our kids, families and communities in 2011.

The people of the Grand Traverse Bay YMCA, its board, volunteers, members, and program users believe our region can be transformed and they have a bold vision to accomplish that with the New Y.

In that bold vision, 2,000 children will learn to swim; people will become healthier through fitness, aquatics and 65 other programs; teens will have a place to grow; 4,000 families will experience a full service health and recreational facility; and we will meet the needs for indoor tennis.

But beyond that, some 35,000 people will be touched in our region by a new Young Men's Christian Association based on the core values of caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility.

Three hundred and eighty (380) families, foundations, and businesses have given nearly \$6 million to implement this vision of building a New YMCA. They have given from \$5 to \$1,700,000 to make the New Y a reality.

In this next year, people will give extraordinarily, at whatever level they can, to insure that lives are changed and the region is transformed by the New Y. It will take a small group of dedicated visionaries to start this change, but it will take all of us to complete it. It will take all of us to "Build something good today!"

Donations can be received at any level at Your Community Foundation at www.4good4ever.org or call the Y at 933-9622 for more information about the New Y.